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1 John 1:5-7 – Fellowship Intimately True

1 John 1:5-7 “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

When we talk about the Gospel it is that thought that you can have a personal relationship with God. Think about that, I mean, literally, as one psychologist puts it, it's the greatest thought that could occupy the human mind, that the God of the universe would want to have a relationship with you. The point is, as John writes this epistle, he is writing to those that wonder if they do have that relationship, or more specifically, do they have that salvation, and what John has repeatedly emphasized, whether it's in the Gospel of John or his epistles, is that in order for you to feel confident in your salvation, you have to feel confident in your relationship with God, which only makes sense. I mean, how in the world could you feel confident that somebody actually loves you, they're going to come back for you, you're going to live with them, if in fact you don't know them? So, John will talk about this word “fellowship” and it's “fellowship,” or *koinōnia* that is used in the Greek that refers to this intimate bond that we have and a commonality that draws us together. So, it is this fellowship that John begins to talk about.

As we come to the beginning of this epistle, we realize that certain things are necessary in order to have an intimate relationship. If you look at the very beginning of 1 John 1, the first thing he begins to talk about is incarnate, it has to be real, has to be in the flesh. You can have a relationship with somebody through mail, through e-mail for so long. But there comes a time when you need to be together with them and it is a marvelous thing that it tells us in John 1 that the word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld the glory of God full of grace and truth. That we would actually see God, we use the word incarnate, in the flesh with us that He would become flesh so that He might have that relationship. We begin to realize that in the Old Testament you hear the voice of God, you see the power of God, but man is still walking away from the Old Testament going, I wonder if He likes me. Jesus comes in the flesh for God so loved the world that He gives His Son, and He walks among us, and you begin to feel in the flesh, Him touching you. John leaned against His chest and feeling the breath of each word that says “I love you.” Can you imagine that? Could you imagine being with God and feeling the breath that says “I love you”? Could you imagine seeing the expressions of the face of Christ when He was saying that He would die for you? Could you imagine seeing the expressions?

There's nothing like the physical, and 1 John 1 begins this way,

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—”

In other words, this was real, it was tangible. Here again, I don't want to go over old stuff, but with the whole COVID thing, we kept coming back to do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). That's what Scripture says. Why? Because it's important. I want to see Christ again. “Well, don't you just want an e-mail from Him?” No. I want to see Christ and He's the one that I want to be with. So, don't forsake the assembling and there's a reason why in Scripture and it actually gives an imperative, a dogmatic imperative, “greet one another with a holy kiss.” (2 Corinthians 13:12). Now the “holy kiss” can actually be described as an embrace; but the point of it is that it's that embrace that you need to feel and God has so ordained that we have bodies, and you go, “Yeah, but we're all going to die. We're going to lose the bodies.” No, you're not because He's going to resurrect the bodies. So, we were meant to have that kind of relationship. It's interesting that John begins with fellowship, beginning with that and the word incarnate, so to speak. Then as we looked in 1 John 1:4 in particular, we begin to realize that fellowship is inextricably tied to the other person. In other words, the bond is so tight that you almost can't tell the one from the other. Your joy is my joy. Your happiness is my happiness. That's what fellowship is. If in fact, I can feel really happy with your pain and I'm doing ok, that's not fellowship. But fellowship basically is as 1 Corinthians 13:5 would say, “Love does not seek its own.”

Let me just show you how it works in Philippians 2, familiar passage, we have read it many times. Paul really begins to describe “fellowship” at the very beginning of Chapter 2.

Philippians 2:1-2. “Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

Watch the text.

Philippians 2:3-4. “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

You're tied. So, whatever is your best interest is my best interest and John will say that in particular in 1 John 1:4, “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” The King James will say “so that your joy will be made complete,” but the point is that it's tied together. Weep for those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). Because you're tied together. I mean, if you have a family that loves each other, if one member of the family suffers, you all suffer and that's what he's talking about with the church. This is what fellowship looks like, and he describes it that way. So, fellowship is incarnate, fellowship is inextricably tied, and then as we look at the passage today in 1 John 1:5-7, we begin to realize that fellowship is intimately true.

When we talk about intimacy, the English definition would be that it suggests a warm and close trusting personal relationship. It's interesting, they put in the word trusting. That's it. What is intimate? Even your English Dictionary will say it's a trusting relationship. It's a warm, close, trusting relationship, personally. So, as we look at the passage, what John's going to describe is this kind of relationship and it's strange in the world that we live in, we've kind of rearranged or even, if I would say, erased certain character traits and absolutes. In this world that we live in, it seems like truth is optional. I mean, you can be true or not be true. You can, as a politician, lie or not lie, it doesn't really matter. It doesn't matter what you say, it doesn't have to be true. Yet, people seem to get behind somebody like that and I'm wondering, how can you get behind somebody if there's no truth? So, John's going to be talking about how it's imperative for there to be truth in a relationship in order to have a relationship. That's a key point and I think one that we oftentimes take for granted.

He's going to start off in 1 John 1:5 by saying you need to know something about God and who He is in order to have fellowship with Him. You need to know what kind of person He is and what He expects in a relationship. That makes sense, doesn't it? Fundamentally, where we're going is that you and I cannot have a relationship with a liar. I'll repeat that over and over again, because that's what you're going to see within the passage. It's impossible. You go, "Well, you can get along with people." You can't, they're liars. So, he's going to start off in verse 5 this way as he begins to reveal who God is,

"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."

It's interesting. He uses that word "message" in the nominative, which means it's the naming case, which means that he's actually declaring this message as almost the person himself. In other words, God is the message. And what is the message that He sends? Well, the message that he announces to us is that "God is Light." That covers a tremendous amount. We feel that James actually gets the point as well, in James 1:17, which tells us that God is the Father of lights and in Him there is no variance or shifting shadow. In other words, there's no shadows with God. What does he mean when he's talking about light? Well, what he's talking about is not only somebody that's transparent, somebody that is enlightening, somebody that is encouraging, that there's no depression with God would be another way of putting it, because that's darkness in a soul, that there's no obscurity with God. You know, when God says that He loves you, you and I don't have to sit back and go, "I wonder what He means by that?" Because He doesn't have a hidden agenda, there is no variance or shifting shadow with Him. When He says it, He means it and so when Christ came to Earth and He told the disciples, "I came that you might have life and might have it abundantly. I'm the resurrection and the life, even if you die, you'll live." They needed to know that He wasn't just blowing smoke because these guys are going to give their lives for this message. You need to know this is true and as they began to walk with Him, they began to realize, "I've seen God."

As John will say in John 1:14, that we beheld the glory of God, “full of grace and truth.” I've never seen someone truer than Him. I've never seen someone more genuine than Him. I've never seen someone more sincere that I can trust him with my soul; and so, they did. The picture here is that's who God is. You have to understand that He has no hidden agenda. Everything that He tells you is truth. There's no kind of hidden thing in the realm. I think of the Gospel of John in particular, and Jesus will repeatedly say in the Gospel of John “I am the Light of the world.”

He'll say it in John 8:12, 9:5, 11:9, over and over again “I am the Light of the world” and that's the emphasis that we begin to see in this passage. You'll see it also in John 1:4,5,7-9, emphasizing the light of God. The reason why this whole concept of light has to be understood is because of how it affects those who would say that they're following Him. If you look with me in John 3, John will deal with this particular issue.

John 3:19-20. “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

Now, I want you to see what He just did in the passage. He paralleled “Light” with “truth”.

John 3:21. “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

In other words, if you're doing something wrong, do you want the lights on? No, you don't want the lights on. One of the things that Paul says is that the people that rob and steal do it at night, most of the time. So, what it's talking about is somebody that is willing to accept the truth, and this is why John repeatedly shows us Jesus interacting with individuals and Him asking simple questions. For instance, the man at the pool of Bethesda had been sick for 38 years. Simple question, “Do you want to get well?” “Yes.” He's healed. But you have to want it, there has to be a transparency, you have to be willing. I mean, it is so bizarre that a woman that has had five husbands and the man that she's living with is not her husband, would be excited to see Jesus, a Rabbi. It's amazing, but the reason why she's so excited is He doesn't judge her. He doesn't judge and she gets excited about the fact that He knows about her life, and He still hasn't thrown a stone at her. She's just amazed and begins to tell everybody else, “Here's a guy that knows everything about me.” And what draws her is the fact that He revealed that. But the thing that allowed her to be drawn was that she was transparent and said yes, I did that. The Scripture will over and over again say you've got to admit that you did something wrong. You've got to be transparent about your sin, otherwise you can't have a relationship with somebody that's not going to be honest with you. It's impossible.

As he starts off, he says, I want you to know who God is. In Him, there's no darkness at all. None, and really the word that is used for “darkness” is obscurity, deviation, anything that would hide, or cover and God is not working in stealth ways. That's why I love the Gospel so much. You know, people go, “Ok, so what do you have to do to be saved?” Believe in the name

of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. "Ok, what else?" That's it. His name is Jesus, and He saves. Jesus saves and Scripture will tell us that's a stumbling block to many people because they've never heard something so clear. They've never heard something so transparent; that somebody would love them, and that somebody would love them even while being spit upon, would be being crucified by them, that He would still come back. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That somebody would be that clear about their love. Yeah, I mean you have to walk away and go, "I've actually seen love for the first time ever," when you come from the cross. So, it starts off, you need to know who God is. Now, if God is this transparent, if God is this real, if God is this genuine, if God is this sincere, if God's not trying to hide things, then what do you think He wants from you? It just makes sense. It says this in 1 John 1:6,

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth"

He uses the subjunctive, which seems to convey that there's a lot of things that you can say down the road; but John is always going to, much like James as he writes the book of James, he's going to get you to the reality of, is this true in your actions? You know, you can say things but what's actually true? We're going to realize that truth has to have with it that sense of, as we talked about earlier, that incarnate effect, that flesh, in other words you need to put your money where your mouth is. There needs to be validity to what you say. There's a lot of people that say, "I know God, I have fellowship with God. I have fellowship in the Church." And John goes, really? Because if in fact your fellowship is not real, you'll never feel confident in your faith. That's the foundation of this book. Unless you are being real about this, and you actually do have fellowship. So, the way it reads, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness-" Ok so, have you been truthful? I mean, have you been truthful with God?

One of the great texts that we oftentimes quote is verse 9, "If we confess our sins." Once again, there's that "if." If you confess. Are you confessing? The reality is there's none good, not one (Romans 3:12). That's the truth and if you'll walk in that truth, there's no way that you'll ever cease being and walking in humility. And if you walk in humility, there'd never be a moment that you feel out of step with God because it's in that walk and humility, admitting to God, "You're God and I'm not." But that's kind of a simple thing, isn't it? I mean, just think about this and it might take a little while for you to meditate on. He's God, you're not. Ok, so once you got that one down pat, then you start walking in that. But if in fact you start using all your defense mechanisms, then you start rational lying about things and making excuses, if you make up stories about this- Just come clean. The wonderful thing about the Gospel and the wonderful thing about the church of God is that it doesn't matter what you've done. God will forgive you if you'll confess your sins, but you have to come clean with them. You have to be transparent with them and unless you are, it's impossible. I just can't overemphasize this. You cannot have a relationship. You can't. It doesn't exist. Relationships don't exist in lies, and it's one of the reasons why Paul writes in Romans 12:9, "Let love be without hypocrisy." In fact, as Paul writes to Timothy, "love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5)

It's got to be real. So, if we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness- he's not going to pull any punches. You're lying. He just nails you right there. If you say it. When it deals with walking, he's dealing with operating in and regulating your life in a certain way, the way you live. Are you living in transparency? I'll put it another way. When you talk to people, do you say what you mean and mean what you say? Now, Scripture tells us that we're to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), but we're not to show facades. Did you ever ask yourself why it was that this woman that's caught an adultery in the Gospel of John, brought to Jesus, He doesn't condemn her? He doesn't condemn this woman at the well. He doesn't condemn Zacchaeus. Does it ever occur to you that He doesn't condemn them, but He does condemn the Pharisees and why that would be true? What He repeats over and over again in Matthew 23 is you're liars. He'll use the word "hypocrites." The point is you put a mask on and you're duplicitous in your relationships. That is to say that you act one way with one person, you act another way with another person. You're lying. Now just ask yourself, (nobody has to raise their hand), but how truthful are you with the people that you're with? I mean, when you say that you really appreciate them being here, do you really appreciate them being here? When you say you really care for somebody, do you really care? Christ will say, if you really love Me, you'll do what I tell you to do. He always puts the words to action. John will start off, "If you say you have fellowship" but the things that you're doing, the way that you're walking, the way that you're living your life, the way that you interact with people is stealth. You're lying. The truth's not in you. He says in 1 John 1:7,

"But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Did you ever ask yourself why he stuck in the "blood of Jesus" there? Because it's a physical act. A sacrifice. "You say You love me." Jesus goes, "I didn't just say it. I bled for you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13) I proved that I loved you."

We tell God all the time, "We love you. We love you. We love you." He says, "Well, I need you to do this for somebody in the in the body of Christ." "Oh, I'm too tired." You know what Scriptures telling you? You're lying. You lied to Me. You said you love Me, but then you wouldn't do what I ask you to do." All the way through the Epistle of John it says, if you look in 1 John 2:3,

"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments."

If you do what He says, right? That's one of the ways that you love Him.

1 John 2:4. "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;"

There's that saying again, "The one who says, 'I have come to know him'" and does not do what he says is lying, "and the truth is not in him."

1 John 2:5. "but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

There's that word, "truly".

Are you reading the same text I'm reading; walk in the same way that He walked? So, back in the passage, "If we say we have fellowship and walk in darkness," we're lying. Well, what does that mean? It means you're not walking the same way He's walking. Can two people walk together unless they're agreed? You should be heading in the same direction as Jesus. You should be talking about the same things as Jesus. You should be pursuing the same things as Jesus. You're walking in the same path of Christ. If that's true, then your fellowship is valid. If you're not, you're lying. John's not going to let you have any leeway here. You're just lying and you're walking away and you're going, "I don't feel confident about our relationship." Well, you haven't been walking with Him. That's why you don't feel good about your relationship. All the way through Scripture you have this emphasis of how lying cannot have a relationship with God. It's an interesting passage, and we won't turn to it, but it's in John 8 and Jesus begins to talk to those that say, "Abraham is our father" and all this, and Jesus says, your father is the devil. And here's how I describe your father, the devil. "He is a liar, and he's the father of lies." We oftentimes think of why is it God doesn't have a good relationship with Satan? Because he's a liar and you can't have a relationship with a liar. You can't. You've got to be true. You go, "Well, you know, the Bible says you ought to forgive." Yes. So, confess your sins and God will forgive you; but you can't lie about it. You can't act like you confess your sins. You can't pretend like you confess your sins.

There's some interesting stories in the Old Testament in particular when you read about Jacob. And we know that Jacob by his very name means "supplanter" which means that he was deceitful in trying to pass himself off as his brother so he can get the birthright (even though God had ordained him to have the birthright in the beginning) he felt like he had to be deceitful in it. So here you have a guy starting off wrong in order to have a relationship. So, God sends him to boot camp. The boot camp that He sends him to is a father-in-law that's going to cheat him over and over and over again. In fact, if I could just show you the passage, if you look with me in Genesis 31. Yeah, we'll just start with Genesis 31 and work our way to Revelation. We should be finished sometime this evening. But in Genesis 31, I won't go into all the details, but obviously Laban has tricked Jacob. Of course, when at first, he said, here's my daughter and he promised the daughter and then he says, oh, you got to marry the other one first. So, he ends up having to work more years. So, you come to chapter 31, and I don't know if it would be a surprise to you or not, but Jacob wants to leave because his father-in-law keeps lying to him. In fact, the statement is he turns to his wives, and he says in Genesis 31:4,

"So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field, and said to them, "I see your father's attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has

been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength. Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me.”

Now we know that over a period of 20 years, he's been caught in this quagmire of deceit and lies. He says in spite of that, God is taking care of me. And so he turns to the daughters, and he turns to his wives, and he goes, how do you feel about leaving your dad? And they go, well, we don't like him either. So, it reads this way if you pick up in Genesis 31:11-12,

“Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.”

Genesis 31:13. “I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.”

God has given him license to leave. Interesting point, he had to learn the lessons, don't lie. It was 20 years. I don't know how long it takes for some people to learn the lesson not to lie, but it took him 20 years.

Genesis 31:14. “Rachel and Leah said to him, ‘Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father’s house? Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price.”

What's interesting about this particular passage, as you read through it, is that they sneak out and when they sneak out, Laban finds out that they snuck out. He's hurt. Why would anybody deceive me? And he cries out, Genesis 31:27,

“Why did you flee secretly and deceive me”

That kind of sums it up in the text and Jacob tries to make excuses to begin with, but then he finally gets angry. How do I know he gets angry?

Genesis 31:36. “Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?”

He's saying, “What did I do wrong with you? You cheated me. What did I ever do wrong?” You know, of course, it's that argument that never seems to work with somebody that's a liar. Anyway, Laban goes, you didn't let me kiss my kids. Now the point is that Laban was actually looking for things that he thought were stolen, that it was really about money, but you know, he's a liar.

So, the point of the passage is, why is Jacob leaving? Because you can't have a relationship with a liar, you can't. It's not going to work. So, all the way through you begin to see as God begins to deal with Laban. It's interesting, Laban wants to build a monument and say, you and I made a deal and you're going to take care of my kids. Of course, he doesn't care for his daughters. He doesn't care for anything but himself; but he builds this monument unto himself to show that

he's caring. Isn't it wonderful how people can, not only say "I'm loving, I'm caring," and they'll even build a monument to it. And you go, "Yeah, the monuments don't make any difference. You're still a liar. You know you still can't be trusted." But anyway, he'll do that, and he'll name it a certain thing in Aramaic and Jacob will go, "No, we're going to name it in Hebrew." Now the point of the matter is, you're going your way, I'm going my way.

Here again, I won't take you to the passage, but the same thing is true with Jacob and Esau. Here he has a brother and Esau has vowed to kill his brother. He says, "Next time I see my brother, I'm going to kill him. When Dad dies, I'm going to kill him." That's nice he waited till his dad died. "But when dad dies, I'm going to kill my brother." Jacob knows this, and you remember at the time that they come together, they meet. I'm going to summarize the text, so they come together, and they meet, and Esau comes, "Brother!" You know, his arms stretched out, "I brought some stuff for you." Jacob goes, "No, it's ok." "Well, why don't we go this way?" "No, it's ok." And as the text says, they both go their separate ways. Now, some people would say, "Come on, Jacob, your brother wants to have a relationship." And Jacob goes, "No, he wants to kill me." You can't have a relationship with a liar. John is more than emphasizing this in the passage, "if we walk in the Light as He himself is in the Light, we have fellowship," not only with God, but if you're walking in the Light and I'm walking in the Light, if we're transparent with each other, if we mean what we say- If, as Scripture says, if you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Spirit of Truth (John 14, John 15) abides in you. You and I have to be real about this, the genuineness of our heart has to be caring. I oftentimes tell people, "I can't not like you. It's not Biblical and the Spirit of God won't let me. See, because our relationship is based on your love for God and your genuine love for Him. Now, you walk away from that, and I can't have fellowship with you. It's impossible to have fellowship with you. What fellowship has light with darkness? You can't do that.

So, what John is saying is if you'll live in this realm of Light, truth, God is Light. If you'll live here, you can have fellowship with God and you'll have fellowship with one another, and it will be unbreakable. But it has to exist. It's a great text because it refers to the necessity of this transparency in our life. Scripture says that you and I need to walk in the truth, and it even says that we expose evil by virtue of us being truthful. The world doesn't like truth. The world doesn't like real. You start telling them that their sin is hurtful, destructive, and they get mad at you. Now all that's true, but they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. If you'll love light, if you'll walk in light. If you'll be genuine in everything you do. Wives, you say you love your husband? You say you love your husband for God? I don't know however you get there, but you say it, then you need to love your husband. Husbands, you need to be sacrificial to your wife. You need to be willing to lay down your life for your wife. Start walking in truth. Don't say you love somebody, then say you don't have time to do something for them that you know and don't withhold good when it's within your hand to do good. Don't lie, walk in truth.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and for the reminder that You're light. The transparency, the joy of Your presence, there's no shifting, there's no deception, there's no unreal. Everything about You is sincere and clearly, we saw that with the person of Christ.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you've not received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, if you've not been real about it, I mean, you could have said it 1001 times, but if you weren't real about it. You're lying. The truth is not in you. It can be. You can pray today.